CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 69 May 3rd, 1961.

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DENMARK

Danish Leader of Relief Work in Calcutta.

The Danish Rural Dean at Finderup, Rev. Johannes Krohn, who was formerly for ten years a missionary in the Santal Parganas in India, has left for Calcutta where he will be in charge of an extensive Church relief programme in the city and environs. Prior to his final departure Rev. J. Krohn has been on a visit to India in order to negotiate with the National Christian Council of India and has likewise visited the Church World Service at New York and the World Council of Churches and The Lutheran World Federation at Geneva. It is these three organizations which support this big project in unison, the practical aspects of it to be managed by a sub-committee under the National Christian Council of India. For the time being Mr. Krohn, who is 52 years old, has been granted leave of absence from his office in the Danish Lutheran National Church for two years.

There are roughly 3 million refugees living in and around Calcutta and it is among these people that the Church Aid Organizations will take up relief work on a large scale. It will comprise taking measures in the fields of social support and health as well as the education and training of young refugees, and attempts will be made at establishing as extensive a "help to self-help" service as possible. If the project develops according to plan, it will be the greatest Church aid undertaking yet in a developing country.

$ 37,000 From Denmark for New Building of the World Council of Churches.

At the recent annual meeting of the Building Committee of the Church of Denmark Council on Inter-Church Relations it was announced that the Council had collected or been promised altogether 257,445 Danish Crowns or roughly $ 37,000 for the new building of the World Council of Churches at Geneva. According to the wishes of the World Council of Churches part of the money will be used for equipment of Danish origin.

Course for Young People Prior to Taking up Work in Developing Countries.

On the initiative of the former Head of the International People's College at Elsinore, Dr. Peter Manniche, there will be two courses in July and August for young Scandinavians who wish to make a contribution in a developing country. One of the courses will take place at the farm of Jerstrup Hovedgård in Denmark, the other at Ringerike Folk High School in Norway. At the courses politicians and experts in various fields who have been to developing countries as consultants of the UNESCO and the FAO and other similar organizations will tell the students about current problems in the respective countries.

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The International Institute for the training of young people from eveloping countries, which is also an undertaking started on the iniiative of Dr. Manniche (see CN No. 64), will open its doors next Ocober to the first 20 students starting on a three-year course, priarily on modern farming methods. The Institute was recently presented ith the manor-house of Clasonsborg near Herning where part of the intruction is to take place. From the Ford Foundation the Institute has eceived a five-year rant of altogether $ 250,000 and the UN Institute or Technical Assistance has held out prospects of scholarships to stuents from developing countries.

ld Country Seat Becomes Retreat Centre.

The fine old country seat of Fuglsang on Lolland will soon be quipped as a retreat and conference centre of the Diocese of Lolland-'alster. The owner, Mrs. Bodil Neergaard, who died in 1959, had exressed the wish that her home should be a place of refuge for people ho needed peace and quiet from the rush of everyday life, and a ommittee headed by Professor Skydsgaard has now published the plans or realizing her wishes. The Hall and surrounding grounds have been laced at the free disposal of the committee by the trustees to whom he estate was bequeathed, the trustees having also undertaken to pay he cost of furnishing the building for its new purpose. The committee ill now start collecting the necessary funds for the running of the retreat centre.

Hungarian Church Dignitaries on Visit.

On their journey home the Hungarian Church delegation which had been visiting Finland (see CN No. 68) stopped over for a few days in Copenhagen. The delegation,headed by the Lutheran Bishop Kaldy, was invited by Bishop W. Westergaard Madsen to meet a number of Danish Churchmen at his residence in Copenhagen.

New Leader of the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army i Denmark will have a new leader as from May 1st this year. Colonel Gösta Blomberg from Sweden, who has been in command in Denmark for only 15 months, has been appointed Acting Commander of the Salvation Army in Germany on the death of the former chief commander, and Colonel Tor Wahlström from Finland has been appointed new Commander-in-Chief in Denmark. Commander Ragnar Åhlberg, also from Finland, is Chief Commander of the Salvation Army in Sweden. The Finnish daily paper "Uusi Suomi" notes with pleasure these appointments as an expression of Northern co-operation within the Salvation Army.

FINLAND

Roman Catholic Opinion of Christianity in Finland.

The Dominican Friar, Father André Bonduelle, who came to Finland in 1949 in order to found an institute of culture "Studium Catholicum" which he directed until 1959, has published an article on Roman Catholicism in Finland in the periodical "Sillage Dominican", the article having now been published as an offprint pamphlet.

Father Bonduelle begins with a brief description of Lutheranism in Finland and emphasizes that secularization is most advanced in three particular groups of the population: among young people, the educated classes, and the workers. The position of Church circles is weakened, owing to a certain thinning down of doctrinal teachings and an under-

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ating of the Creed. The Roman Catholics in Finland, on the other hand, uffer under paucity and isolation - and this is true of the present s well as of the past. Among the factors making it difficult for Roman atholicism to gain a hearing Father Bonduelle mentions national feelngs, a subjective attitude to life, ignorance, and prejudices. At the ame time he has the impression of a healthy moral attitude and a sincere eligious feeling in the Finnish nation, although the latter may be difficult sometimes to distinguish from a certain sentimental and romantic utlook on life.

As regards Roman Catholicism, Father Bonduelle does not envisage renaissance of this in Finland in the near future. As a matter of act, he does not at all want to look upon the relationship between atholicism and Lutheranism as a case of victory or defeat, of profit r loss, as between two contesting parties. The immediate issue must rimarily be a mutual attempt at coming into contact with one another o that prejudices may be removed, horizons widened, and the number of allacies be reduced, at least.

Reorganization of the Keeping of National Registers.

At an extraordinary Bishops' Conference in Helsinki (Helsingfors) in April a reorganization of the keeping of the national register, which in Finland as in Sweden is done by the ministers of the Church, was finally decided upon. The reorganization has been thoroughly prepared by a committee, set up for the purpose, and consists primarily in the old heavy volumes of Church records being substituted by index cards to be filled in for each family.

Uneasiness about the Finnish Congregation in Stockholm.

A motion in the Swedish Parliament has caused uneasy feelings and opposition in Finland. According to the motion, Finnish citizens in Stockholm belonging to the Lutheran Church should not automatically become members of the Finnish congregation in the City, but should be free to join the local Swedish congregation in the parish where they live.

In Finland it is feared that such an arrangement would cause great difficulties for the Finnish congregation in Stockholm. The Finnish daily paper "Uusi Suomi" strongly opposes the proposal, maintaining that the reason given for it is far-fetched and exaggerated. Among other things, the supporters of the motion refer to the Act about Religious Freedom, which the paper feels has no bearing on the matter. The "Uusi Suomi" emphasizes the importance of the now 400 years old Finnish congregation and its versatile contributions and expects the Swedish Parliament to uphold the existence and rights of the Finnish congregation. According to information received by the paper, the Cathedral Chapter of Stockholm, who has been asked for opinion, is definitely against the proposal.

Bishop Alaja on the Case of Speaking with Tongues at Oulu (Uleåborg).

The message said to have been received by a typist at Oulu (Uleåborg) while speaking with tongues, which has been spread all over Finland (see CN No. 67 and No. 68), still occupies the minds of people.

Occasioned by this Bishop Osmo Alaja, Mikkeli (Sct. Michel) Diocese, has issued the following statement:

"The woman prophet at Uleåborg has received revelations to the effect that we are on the verge of the great tribulation unless enough righteous believers can be found among our people so that God may still

ave mercy upon us... From several points of view these messages have ad a healthy effect on our nation by calling to repentance. As we an all agree, we have forgotten to an alarming extent the words of al. 6,7. (Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man oweth, that he shall also reap.) By her cry of distress the young evivalist preacher has called forth a rather extensive vigil of upplication, and her friends have likewise been very active. But as or the prophesies giving exact information about times and places, hey have caused feelings of panic in certain people. We may, however, eet the future with confidence and cheerfulness if we trust our lives nto the hands of God."

NORWAY

Advantages of Seniority in North Norway.

On the recommendation of the Bishops and the Clergymen's Association the Government Department for Church and Education has decided, owing to the difficulty in filling certain vacant encumbencies in North Norway, to give ministers in the two most northern dioceses, North and South Hålogaland, advantages of seniority over encumbents in other dioceses. Five years of service will give two increments of salary, after which there will be one year's increment for every three years of service. The new rule is expected to increase the number of applications to vacancies in North Norway where the climate and the size of the parishes may have a negative effect.

Bouquets for Missionaries.

At present the missionary work of the Christian Church is being praised from many sides in connection with the debate on aid to developing countries. An article by the author, Albert Henrik Mohn, in the Norwegian daily paper "Verdens Gang", is typical of this handing out of bouquets.

In the article the author mentions President Kennedy's plans for a "peace corps" of young Americans who are willing to make a contribution in the developing countries and share the living conditions of the people whom they have come to help. In contrast to this he describes how Western experts in the developing countries have hitherto lived in "air-conditioned ivory towers" without real fellowhsip with the coloured people with a standard of living far below their own. Only two categories of white people have met the coloured races as equals: the emissaries of the Kremlin and the Christian missionaries.

The missionaries have not been afraid of dirtying their hands, he says. "They went out to help people, they taught Nkrumah and Touré, Kasavubu and Kenyetta to read and write at a time when our own radical intellectuals declared that Africa was happy in her sunny heathenism and charming ignorance and that the Christian missionaries had no right to intrude and spoil the idyl."

Mr. Mohn bows in respect to the prayer-houses which have been the butt of the Marxists and maintains that one day, when the developing countries are no longer underdeveloped and begin to write their own histories, it will be seen that there were higher ceilings in the prayer-houses than in the "Folkets Hus" (the meeting place of the Labour Party).

The article emphasizes Mr. Kennedy's attempts, in connection with his "peace corps" plans, at getting in touch with the Christian missionary organizations in order to utilize their mine of useful experiences, as worthy of serving as a model.

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Quoting the article the weekly "Vår Kirke" adds that such an ttitude is sadly lacking in the Norwegian authorities in charge of ne aid to developing countries.

SWEDEN

rotest Against Intercommunion.

In connection with the Scottish-Swedish conference held at Sigtuna rom April 4th to 7th all the delegates took part in two communion ervices, the one according to the Swedish-Lutheran, the other according o the Scottish-Presbyterian order of service.

Prior to the conference the Swedish High Church fraction "Kyrklig örnyelse" (Church Renewal) under the chairmanship of Dean Gustaf Adolf anell, Växjö, had protested against the proposed joint Eucharist, re- erring to the fact that in 1952 there had been no actual discussion on ntercommunion; that there was no official agreement to this effect; hat, according to the views of the "Kyrklig Förnyelse", intercommunion vith the Scottish Church would be in clear contradiction of the Swedish hurch cannon and Confession; and that it would widen the cleavages in he Swedish Church and hamper the ecumenical connections with the Angli- an Churches in England and Scotland.

At the same time Bishop Bo Giertz, Gothenburg, in an article in he "Svensk Pastoraltidskrift" has accounted for the facts of the case s they appear to him. In 1952 the then Archbishop Yngve Brilioth sent circular to the Swedish Bishops in which he said that Professor Donald Baillie of St. Andrew's in a letter had expressed the wish for closer ontact between the Swedish and the Scottish Churches and for negotia- ions on a possible agreement on intercommunion. The Archbishop had eplied that he fully shared the desire for closer contact, but con- idered the negotiations for intercommunion superfluous in as much as here was nothing on either side to prevent such intercommunion. As r. Baillie had subsequently asked for permission to publish the Arch- ishop's reply, the Archbishop now in his circular requested the ishops to send in any objections within ten days. Otherwise he would ake it to mean "that my standpoint meets with your approval and that here is no objection to the letter being published".

At the time Bishop Giertz had understood the Archbishop's circular o mean that intercommunion was an actual fact and that the Archbishop nly wanted their consent to the publication of the letter. Later on e realized that there was no previous agreement about intercommunion, or which reason he finds it necessary to discuss the matter before a ossible future agreement.

ourth Woman Minister in Sweden.

At the end of May there will be four women ministers in the wedish Lutheran National Church, Bishop Ruben Josefson in the Härnö- and Cathedral performing the ordination of Miss Karin Larson, Graduate n Theology. Besides her theological training, the new woman minister as passed a course at the Institute of Social Science in Stockholm nd at the moment is employed as an assistant in the social services.

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In its report the Commission set up by the Swedish Government pro- oses the frame-work of the future Swedish aid to developing countries. t is suggested to establish a central organization called "Svensk Ut-

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At the time Bishop Giertz had understood the Archbishop's circular to mean that intercommunion was an actual fact and that the Archbishop only wanted their consent to the publication of the letter. Later on he realized that there was no previous agreement about intercommunion, for which reason he finds it necessary to discuss the matter before the possible future agreement.

Ordination of Women Minister in Sweden.

At the end of May there will be four women ministers in the Swedish Lutheran National Church, Miss Ruth Gregerson in the Västerås and Cathedral parish, Miss Vera Nilsson in the Karlskoga parish, Miss Thorbjörg Jonsson in the Hedvig Eleonora parish, Stockholm, and Miss Elsa Sjöblom in the Hedemora parish. Besides her theological training, the new women minister has passed a course at the Institute of Social Science in Stockholm and at the moment is employed as an assistant in the social services.

Foreign Missions to Take Part in the "Swedish Aid to Developing Countries"

In its report the Christian Aid Commission set up by the Swedish Government proposes the frame-work of the future Swedish aid to developing countries. It is suggested to establish a central organization called "Svensk Ut-

vecklingshjälp" with a Board of Management consisting of 10 members, 5 of whom are to represent non-political aid organizations, among them the Foreign Missions of both the National Lutheran Church and the Free Churches. The report further suggests that Foreign Missions are utilized as a channel for a part of the official aid also, as they have their experts on the spot with a thorough knowledge of the local languages and consequently will be able to do the work at a minimum cost of administration. It is proposed, for instance, from public funds to finance the expansion of some of the mission hospitals and vocational schools in the developing countries.

In an editorial occasioned by the publication of the report the weekly of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden "Svensk Veckotidning" writes:

"The sometimes deeply rooted suspicion in missionary circles with regard to co-operation with political and profane organs ought not to prevent them from accepting with confidence and fearlessness the new spirit of sympathy which is becoming more and more usual. Although otherwise not insignificant, the question of whether the missions themselves are able to find new resources in support of their humanitarian enterprises must be of secondary importance in this connection. Far more important is the fact that a door has been opened, the iron curtain of isolation been broken down, and the undertakings of Foreign Missions been recognized as true expressions of the responsibility of our nation towards less developed sister nations in other continents."

The Church and the Traffic Accidents.

The Swedish Bishops' Conference has decided that the Church of Sweden shall support the propaganda for a more careful motor traffic. All confirmation condidates will receive a pamphlet on traffic security in connection with the teaching on the commandment "Thou shalt do no murder".

Minister for Students from Africa and Asia Studying in Sweden.

The Youth Organization of the Lutheran National Church of Sweden has suggested that a minister from Africa or Asia should be appointed for pastoral work among the hundreds of students from Africa and Asia now studying in Sweden. A minister from the Tamil Church in India or the Haya Church in Tanganyika ought to be invited for this service, and he could also study at a Swedish university. The Bishops' Conference has taken a very positive attitude to this proposal and has authorized "Svenska Kyrkohjälpen", the Church Organization for Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, to finance this work. The matter is now dealt with by the Board of Mission, and its decision is expected to be made in the near future.

Swedish Minister for Scandinavians Living in Geneva.

A Swedish minister, Dr. Lennart Söderström, has been appointed from August 1st, to serve among the 200 Swedes and 200 other Scandinavian citizens who live in Geneva, Switzerland. Dr. Söderström, who was born in 1918, is now senior master at the State secondary school of Hudiksvall.

Archbishop Hultgren to the Enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Archbishop of Uppsala Dr. Gunnar Hultgren has accepted an invitation to the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Arthur Michael Ramsey, which will take place on June 27th.

port of the Parliamentary Commissioner on the "Lines of Action" the Confessional Front.

The Swedish Parliamentary Commissioner for the Judiciary and the vil Administration has now finished his investigation on the "Lines Action" published by the organization "Kyrklig Samling" (Confessional ront) of which the Bishop of Gothenburg Bo Giertz is the leader.

The Parliamentary Commissioner finds that in three respects the ines of Action" mean that ministers and laymen employed by the Church o put them into practice are liable to penalty:

A rector who refuses to open his church for a service or ceremony be performed by a woman minister neglects his official duty.

A minister who does not record in the church registers official nctions performed by a woman minister is guilty of a breach of duty.

A layman employed by the Church who refuses to do duty at a rvice or another official function performed by a woman minister also guilty of a breach of duty.

The Parliamentary Commissioner has found that the "Lines of Action" re against the Swedish law. As, however, those who are responsible r this document did not count with the possibility that the action commended in the document could be liable to penalty and as this estion possibly may have been unclear he has found that in this rt of the case no more proceedings from his side are needed. That shop Giertz has supported the action against women ministers should t make the Bishop guilty of a breach of duty, though the publishing the document has made it more difficult to carry through the amend- nt of the law and deepened the disunity in the Church. It is, how- er, obvious that Bishop Giertz has considered the "Lines of Action" be necessary in order to still the anxiety which the new law had used in the movement to which he belongs. There is no reason to ubt that the Bishop was lead by a sincere concern for what from his int of view seemed to be useful for the Church.

The Parliamentary Commissioner refers to a declaration made by e Archbishop of Uppsala who has stressed that everything must be ne to avoid that a minister is legally prosecuted because of his tions made in accordance with his religious conviction. The Parlia- ntary Commissioner fully agrees with the Archbishop that pressure these matters of conscience shall be avoided and that every minister all bear in mind his duty to draw only such conclusions from his andpoint which are necessarily connected with his conviction and at mutual consideration and Christian forbearance shall be practised.

In an interview to the paper "Svenska Dagbladet" Bishop Giertz ys that the main question has been whether in the future it will be lowed to those who are convinced that the decision about women nisters is against the Word of God, to remain in the Church of Swe- n and work there. After the declaration made by the Parliamentary mmissioner this matter is clear.

On the third point, regarding the duty of laymen employed by the urch, the Parliamentary Commissioner makes an exemption from the le that nobody should be forced to do anything in his service which viously is against his conviction in this matter. This is the only the 17 points which he finds to show a way which is juridically acceptable, Bishop Giertz said.

Report of the Parliamentary Commissioner on the "Ideas of Action" and the Contemporary Church.

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The Parliamentary Commissioner finds that in three respects the Ideas of Action" mean that ministers and laymen employed by the Church put them into practice are liable to penalty:

A rector who refuses to open his church for a service or ceremony be performed by a woman minister neglects his official duty.

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A layman employed by the Church who refuses to do duty at a rvice or another official function performed by a woman minister also guilty of a breach of duty.

The Parliamentary Commissioner has found that the "Ideas of Action" re against the Swedish law. As, however, those who are responsible r this document did not count with the possibility that the action commended in the document could be liable to penalty and as this action possibly may have been unclear he has found that in this rt of the case no more proceedings from his side are needed. Thus shop Olerta has supported the action against women ministers should t make the Bishop guilty of a breach of duty, though the publishing the document has made it more difficult to carry through the amend- nt of the law and deepened the disunity in the Church. It is, how- er, obvious that Bishop Olerta has considered the "Ideas of Action" be necessary in order to still the anxiety which the new law had used in the movement to which he belongs. There is no reason to ubt that the Bishop was led by a sincere concern for what from his nt of view seemed to be useful for the Church.

The Parliamentary Commissioner refers to a declaration made by e Archbishop of Uppsala who has stressed that everything must be done to avoid that a minister is legally prosecuted because of his tions made in accordance with his religious conviction. The Parlia- ntary Commissioner fully agrees with the Archbishop that pressure these matters of conscience shall be avoided and that every minister ll bear in mind his duty to draw only such conclusions from his ndpoint which are necessarily connected with his conviction and t mutual consideration and Christian forbearance shall be practised.

In an interview to the paper "Svenska Dagbladet" Bishop Olerta ys that the main question has been whether in the future it will be llowed to those who are convinced that the decision about women nisters is against the "Word of God", to remain in the Church of Swe- n and work there. After the declaration made by the Parliamentary missioner this matter is clear.

On the third point, regarding the duty of laymen employed by the urch, the Parliamentary Commissioner makes an exception from the le that nobody should be forced to do anything in his service which viously is against his conviction in this matter. This is the only the 17 points which he finds to show a way which is juridically acceptable, Bishop Olerta said.

With regard to the recording in the registers of functions per-
rmed by a woman minister the "Lines of Action" show an alternative
y which obviously is not illegal.

The question of opening the churches for woman ministers is not
ntioned in the "Lines of Action". On this point there may be con-
ict situations.

If, however, all parties consider the wise rule which the Arch-
shop of Uppsala has expressed and with which the Parliamentary
mmissioner has agreed, namely that no provocations should be made
would perhaps be possible to avoid legal prosecutions, Bishop
ertz declared.

On one point Bishop Giertz has expressed his sincere disagreement.
e Parliamentary Commissioner thinks that it is a duty of a bishop to
frain from making declarations which could give somebody the opinion
at it would be morally justified to work against a new law or neglect
e obligations which it contains. To this the reply is that every-
ing depends upon the contents of the law. If the law is against the
rd of God it is the clear duty of a bishop to work against it by all
ans and to refuse to obey it.